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## Truancy court established at Bain

CRANSTON — Truancy court comes to a local middle school as state and school officials work together to keep young teens in school.

On Tuesday, Judge Jeremiah S. Jeremiah Jr., chief judge of the Family Court, was at Hugh B. Bain Middle School to mark the opening of the seventh school-based truancy court in the state.

The court will be in session at Bain every Friday morning, and local school officials said it will give them a valuable tool in combating truancy problems.

Supt. Catherine Ciarlo said the local court will handle truancy cases from the city's three middle schools — Bain, Park

### CRANSTON

View and Western Hills.

It will not only allow schools to deal with truancy problems more expeditiously, she said, but will allow schools to work with local social service agencies so they can get at the root of the varied problems that keep many young teens from coming to school.

"Now we will be able to work with various local agencies and offer intervention," Ciarlo said. "Truancy is not just a student problem, it is usually a family

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## Truancy

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problem, and this new court will allow us to address it as a whole."

The Family Court debuted the in-school truancy courts at Providence's Hope High School last year.

Others followed quickly, and there are currently truancy courts in Woonsocket, Central Falls, Pawtucket and Newport schools.

"When dealing with children and their education, we must unite with schools, government and families to provide the opportunity to help better our children's education at all levels," Jeremiah said this week in announcing the new court in Cranston.

An eighth truancy court is slated to open in Warwick, at Gorton Junior High School, next month.

Warwick School Supt. Robert J. Shapiro said that Warwick welcomes the new court.

"I think this is going to have a great impact on our truancy rate," he said yesterday. "We will be integrating parents and their students because they will appear before the magistrate together."

Buddy Croft, chief of staff for the Family Court, said that the

magistrate who will preside over the truancy courts in Cranston and Warwick is Angela Bucci.

Croft said that Family Court is committed to the in-school truancy courts and has already estimated that the truancy rate in communities that had such courts dropped by about 40 percent last year.

The courts are in middle schools or junior high schools, he said, because that is the age group that school officials have identified as having the greatest chance of being deterred from chronic truancy.

Ciarlo said that until now, Cranston has had to hold all its truancy hearings in Family Court and there is sometimes a long wait as more pressing matters, such as criminal cases, take precedence.

With truancy court in session every Friday at Bain starting next month, Cranston school officials will not only be able to deal with problems quickly, she said, but will also be able to work with the magistrate in having ample follow-up.

Croft said that, in addition to Warwick, the Family Court plans to open three more truancy courts by the end of November.

Said Jeremiah, "The message we are attempting to convey with our truancy courts is that children belong